

Testimony Before the House Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Fiscal Year 2016 BIA, BLM and IHS Budget
Presented by Lindsey Manning, Chairman
Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation
March 24, 2015

Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member McCollum, and members of the Subcommittee, my name is Lindsey Manning. I am Chairman of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. I am pleased to submit testimony concerning the FY 2016 Budget for the BIA, BLM and IHS. The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes are grateful for this Subcommittee's long standing support of Indian tribes and for sharing its understanding of Indian country with your colleagues so that this Congress can continue to empower tribal governments and promote the bipartisan national goals of local control and Indian self-determination.

The Duck Valley Reservation is a large, rural reservation that straddles the Idaho-Nevada border along the east fork of the Owyhee River. It encompasses 450 square miles in Elko County, Nevada and Owyhee County, Idaho. The Reservation is 140 miles from Boise, Idaho, and 100 miles from Elko, Nevada. Many of our 2000 Tribal members make their living as farmers and ranchers, though a number of them are employed by the Tribes. We assume most duties of the BIA and IHS under self-governance compacts, although the BIA continues to provide law enforcement and detention services on the Reservation.

Building *and* maintaining tribal infrastructure is our greatest challenge:

- We are replacing our administration buildings contaminated by mold;
- We have renovated a detention center to create a modern facility that can house treatment programs and implement "alternatives to incarceration" programs to reduce recidivism.
- We are undertaking road safety improvements and reconstruction of existing roads to make our community safer;
- We are building our Cultural Resources Protection and Greenhouse/Native Plant Programs to employ and train the next generation of Tribal members to protect cultural resources sites and, in partnership with BLM, restore native plants indigenous to the region following damaging wildfires;
- We are working to restore salmon to the Reservation for the first time in over 80 years;
- We continue to look for economic development opportunities.

In too many instances, however, our success in these areas is largely dependent on Federal appropriations which, in turn, determine whether economic and social conditions on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation improve or worsen. While we contribute tribal resources to these endeavors as best we can, we look to our federal partner for support. As a remote reservation, we cannot turn to a nearby jurisdiction for help in providing essential services. The Tribal government is the only local government available. If we fall short, our members suffer. For this reason, we support the President's FY 2016 budget request for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management and Indian Health Service. Without sustained growth in these federal programs, we cannot meet the needs of our Reservation. We encourage this

Subcommittee to build on the proposed increases in the President's budget for these essential Tribal programs. Our priorities for FY 2016 include:

1. Increase funding for the BIA Public Safety and Special Initiatives Program – To provide alternatives to incarceration for adult and juvenile offenders from Duck Valley and alter the “detention first, treatment second,” mentality, we urge the Subcommittee to build on the President's modest \$11.5 million increase (3.2%) for BIA's Public Safety and Justice Programs. We receive \$250,000 in additional recurring funding to participate in a pilot program with the BIA's Office of Justice Services (OJS) to reduce recidivism on the Duck Valley Reservation by creating an “alternative to incarceration” model program. Housing shortages limit our ability to hire and place substance abuse counselors, mental health professionals and detention personnel on the Reservation to kick start our pilot program.

For that reason, we also urge the Subcommittee to expand the greatly reduced Housing Improvement Program (HIP) above its \$8 million budget. If we can access HIP funds, it would free up other resources to address the need for housing health and law enforcement/detention professionals on the reservation where housing is simply not available.

I also urge the Subcommittee to support the President's \$4 million increase for the BIA's “Special Initiatives” subaccount for FY 2016 and include statutory language to make clear that such funds may be used for the purchase or lease of temporary trailers or modular units to house personnel associated with law enforcement, corrections, probation, tribal courts and other professionals serving adult and youth offenders. For rural communities, housing is often the linchpin that enables key personnel to locate to the Reservation and make a difference.

2. Fund the Owyhee Initiative within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Owyhee Initiative is a joint effort by ranchers, recreationalists, County and State officials, and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to protect, manage and appropriately use public lands in Owyhee County, Idaho. In 2009, Congress passed the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, Pub. L. 111-1. In 2010, we entered into a five-year agreement with BLM to protect cultural resources and increase public understanding and appreciation of these resources. Increased recreational use and encroachment within the Owyhee River Wilderness Area and other federal lands place these resources under stress. This year we seek to enter into another five-year agreement with BLM. As the Department has noted, urban growth and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use on public lands continues to increase and place increased demand on public health and safety and natural and cultural resource protection programs. We have been a good partner with BLM.

BLM funding several years ago allowed us to purchase two Cessna planes and ATV equipment and hire one Chief Ranger and a Cultural Resources Director to patrol public lands and report violations of cultural and religious sites to BLM officials. We work closely with BLM and Owyhee County officials to coordinate compatible recreation use within BLM lands in Owyhee County, especially within the wilderness areas where we seek to protect cultural resource sites important to our Tribes. The Ranger and Director also spot and report wildfires to BLM officials before the fires can do great damage to sensitive, remote areas.

We seek *recurring* BLM funds to continue this important work to protect cultural sites and establish a Reserve Ranger Program to engage tribal youth in cultural and related activities during the summer. The Chief Ranger and Cultural Resources Director are near retirement and it is essential that we hire and train replacement staff, including a pilot, to continue their important work for our Tribes. We seek BLM funds to hire an Assistant Director, one adult Tribal Ranger and two part-time Youth Rangers, train a qualified applicant as an additional pilot, purchase two more ATVs and two camp trailers to permit tribal personnel to remain in the field and overhaul the two Cessna planes per FAA regulations and construct a hanger at the Owyhee Airport to centralize our operation and increase surveillance flights over Owyhee County. We contribute nearly 50% of the required budget but cannot sustain this important program without federal support. Our plan requires \$600,000 to fully fund the above activities.

We also support the Administration's \$2.0 increase for BLM Cultural Resources Management and other BLM accounts used to manage and protect archaeological and historic properties on public lands. Scattered across millions of acres of high desert in southwest Idaho and northern Nevada are the remnants of campsites, villages, hunting blinds and rock inscriptions that tell the story of the Shoshone-Paiute and other tribes. After speaking with Shoshone-Bannock Tribal officials, together with northern tier Nevada tribes (including the Te-Moak, Battle Mountain, South Fork and Goshute tribes), we seek BLM funds to form a tribal cultural resources work group to spread best practices for cultural resources management and protection that we have learned over the last 20 years. We would be a good candidate for a BLM grant. We request a special appropriation to create a multi-tribal task force to propose and design strategies for on the ground protection of Native American cultural resources for the Upper Great Basin and High Plateau of the tri-state area of Nevada, Oregon and Idaho.

3. Telecommunications (fiber optics) – The Tribes continue to need fiber infrastructure over five miles for connectivity among Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Tribal Headquarters, Juvenile Services Center, Fire Station and the Owyhee Community Health Facility. The health center serves as the Wide Area Network (WAN) hub for the Tribes' and health center's computer network. Connectivity among these facilities and programs would alleviate the long-term monthly recurring cost we pay to an Ethernet Circuit provider (\$96,000 annually). We require \$500,000 to construct new fiber networks and cover construction inspection fees. We urge the Subcommittee to increase appropriations so that remote, rural communities like Duck Valley can improve telecommunications networks and break down communication barriers to promote education and job opportunities for our members.

4. East Fork Owyhee Salmon Steelhead Recovery and Reintroduction Project – We seek to return Chinook salmon and steelhead trout to Duck Valley and the State of Nevada through an innovative "trap-and-haul" program. Dam construction along the Columbia and Snake Rivers eliminated salmon from the State of Nevada. Duck Valley is unique in that it supports two major tributaries to the Snake River. Last year, we financed a pilot study that found that habitat in the East Fork of the Owyhee River may support a summer rearing capacity of between 3,300 and 43,000 juvenile steelhead trout and from 3,600 to 41,000 Chinook salmon. With additional funding of approximately \$210,000 for the next three years, we can complete our habitat surveys of the East Fork Owyhee River, including obtaining data on non-summer river conditions, as well as an assessment of the Bruneau River habitat.

We propose to transport adult fish from Lower Granite Dam or Hells Canyon Dam and release the fish above China Dam into the East Fort Owyhee River to spawn. Emigrating juvenile fish would later be captured and released downstream from passage carriers on the Snake River to complete their migration to the Pacific Ocean. Adult salmon originating from the East Fork Owyhee River would later be captured in the lower Snake River and transported back upstream.

We urge the Subcommittee to support the President's \$48 million increase to the BIA's Trust-Natural Resources Management program budget, including the Fish, Wildlife & Parks program. Tribes contract a significant part of the Natural Resources program funds. An increase to the BIA's Trust-Natural Resources budget can help us with this innovative project to restock the Reservation with salmon and steelhead trout.

5. Quagga Mussel Issue (invasive species) – The FY 2016 budget proposes to maintain funding at essentially the FY 2014 funding levels for invasive species (\$6.7 million). This is penny wise and pound foolish. We seek funds to add an additional boat-washing station at the Wildhorse Reservoir near the reservation for the boat launch we lease. This will ensure that boaters who then transport their boats to tributaries of the Columbia and Snake Rivers do not transfer invasive species into those rivers. We are also working with Nevada State officials to improve existing state laws concerning this issue. Ignoring invasive species is only asking for trouble. Please augment the FY 2016 budget for invasive species above the President's request.

6. Native Plant Program/Greenhouse – In cooperation with the Idaho Bureau of Land Management, the Tribes gather, propagate and make available seed and other native plant materials that are indigenous to the region. Through a series of assistance agreements with BLM, we built a greenhouse and are growing seedlings (including sagebrush and bitterbrush seedlings) for planting on adjacent public lands. This assists BLM and other agencies in their efforts to restore lands damaged by wildfires and helps employ tribal members. This year, we are completing construction of three greenhouses, plus installation of equipment, walk-in-cooler and workshop. We plan to hire a greenhouse manger and have tribal members collect seeds. For FY 2016, we seek funding to build a facility to house equipment to dry, clean and store seed and hire part-time greenhouse staff to focus on marketing and finances. We plan to have 40,000 containerized grasses and shrub seedlings available for sale, together with willow and other riparian plant cuttings and local vegetables for sale and distribution through our "Honor Our Elders" program. We seek Interior Department appropriations of \$205,000 over the next five years to expand our program and be a reliable supplier of native plants and seedlings for BLM.

7. IHS - We fully support the President's FY 2016 budget increases to the Indian Health Service (IHS) budget, especially in the area of clinical services, including Purchased/Referred Care and Contract Support Costs (CSC). We also support the Administration's request to shift CSCs to a "mandatory" appropriation beginning in FY 2017, but would want to ensure that the shift is permanent in nature. This funding must be paid. We are pleased to report that after years of litigation, the Tribes recently settled unpaid CSC claims with the IHS. The settlement will allow us to augment our available health services for the benefit of our members.

Please build on the President's budget request to meet tribal health and safety needs that strengthen our community. Thank you for affording me the opportunity to testify.